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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/672,173	09/25/2003	Tomoaki Koseki	P-MWBAND1	9870
7590	05/16/2006		EXAMINER	
Tomoaki Koseki 17-2, Sotokanda 2-chome Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 101-0021 JAPAN			POUS, NATALIE R	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3731	

DATE MAILED: 05/16/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.		Applicant(s)	
	10/672,173		KOSEKI, TOMOAKI	
	Examiner		Art Unit	
	Natalie Pous		3731	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>9/25/03</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Specification

Applicant is reminded of the proper language and format for an abstract of the disclosure.

The abstract should be in narrative form and generally limited to a single paragraph on a separate sheet within the range of 50 to 150 words. It is important that the abstract not exceed 150 words in length since the space provided for the abstract on the computer tape used by the printer is limited. The form and legal phraseology often used in patent claims, such as "means" and "said," should be avoided. The abstract should describe the disclosure sufficiently to assist readers in deciding whether there is a need for consulting the full patent text for details.

The language should be clear and concise and should not repeat information given in the title. It should avoid using phrases which can be implied, such as, "The disclosure concerns," "The disclosure defined by this invention," "The disclosure describes," etc.

The word "invention" should be avoided in the abstract. Appropriate correction is required

Claim Objections

Claims 3 and 4 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim should refer to other claims in the alternative form only. See MPEP § 608.01(n). Accordingly, the claims 3 and 4 not been further treated on the merits.

Accordingly, examiner will interpret claims 3 and 4 as being dependent on claim 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 4 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 4 recites the limitations "the insertion guide," "the front box," "the slide grip," and "the hold gear," in lines 2-4. There is insufficient antecedent basis for these limitations in the claims.

Further, Claim 4, lines 5-6 refer to "and when the tension exceeds the pulling intensity of the sternum suture band, the band is automatically cut off." It is unclear from the claim and the specification what applicant means by "the band is automatically cut off."

Examiner will interpret this limitation to mean that the band is capable of being removed when a certain force is applied to the needle end of the strap.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1 and 3 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Peters et al. (US5549619).

Regarding Claim 1, Peters teaches a sternum suture material utilized during a cardiac surgery wherein a needle (7) to pierce through the sternum is attached at one end of a resin-made band (1), the center part of the band is in a sash form, one side of

the sash has a multiple number of serial projections (2) to prevent untwining, the other end of the band is made in a box form (3), the needle that pierces through the sternum passes through inside the box (fig. 1), and the lower side of the upper portion of the inside of the box has receptors (4) to receive the untwining-prevention projections, thus this sternum suture band is made to gradually fasten and then fix the sternum.

Regarding Claim 3, Peters teaches a sternum suture band according to Claim 1, wherein the main part of the band is made of material that are absorbed in the body through mechanisms of hydrolysis or decomposition by enzymes (Column 3, proximate lines 28-33).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Peters in view of Jermyn Jr. (US 5881435). Peters teaches all limitations of preceding dependent claim 1, but fails to disclose and when the tension exceeds the pulling intensity of the sternum suture band, the band is automatically cut off. Jermyn Jr. teaches a device wherein there exists a line of weakness (28) such that when the user pulls the insertion end along the line of weakness, the strap is released in order to allow for easy removal of the band. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device of Peters with a line of weakness as taught by Jermyn Jr. in order to allow for easy removal of the band.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Peters in view of Meeks (US 4537432). Peters teaches all limitations of preceding dependent claim 1, but fails to disclose and when the tension exceeds the pulling intensity of the sternum suture band, the band is automatically cut off. Meeks teaches a device wherein there exists a line of weakness (26) such that when the user pulls the insertion end with enough force, the strap is breaks in order to allow for easy removal of the band. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device of Peters with a line of weakness as taught by Meeks in order to allow for easy removal of the band.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Peters in view of Corlew (US 6030393). Peters teaches all limitations of preceding dependent claim 1, but fails to disclose wherein the needle has a dull end. Corlew teaches a

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surgical needle (10) comprising a blunt tip (20) in order to not induce trauma or damage to tissue. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the needle of Peters with a blunt tip as taught by Corlew in order to not induce trauma or damage to tissue.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1-4 provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1-4 of copending Application No. 10/673403. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because they relate to the same inventive concept being a sternum closure device comprising a sash portion with projections to be held by a box portion, and wherein the device is bioabsorbable.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Natalie Pous whose telephone number is (571) 272-6140. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:30pm, off every 2nd Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anhtuan Nguyen can be reached on (571) 272-4963. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

NRP
5/8/06



(JACKIE) TAN-UYEN HO
PRIMARY EXAMINER

5/10/06